

PHILOSOPHICAL.

IN WHAT CONSISTS THE DIFFERENCE?
(COMMUNICATED.)
NUMBER TWELVE.

At what period of time men began to inhabit the valley of the Nile, or from whence they came and in what numbers, are perhaps at this day quite unanswerable, and might not prove of practical benefit if they should be answered, satisfactorily, except to settle an ethnological point, which is now a mooted question between the advocates of a unity and diversity of the human race. The rudimental labors of that people, or the most important, must necessarily have been directed to the procurement of daily subsistence, to be gathered from the cultivation of the soil. Their immediate wants being supplied, and the social compact duly organized, their attention would in all probability be next turned to some sort of religion; seeing that this attribute possesses a preponderating influence over the human character. It is within the province of reasonable conjecture that many years, if not centuries, elapsed before men began to build cities; during which time the tillers of the ground, and the wandering herdsmen on the plains, had not been shut out from observation, but had watched carefully the ever-changing scenery of the heavens, and furnished names for many of the more luminous of the planets, which were considered to impart influence directly to the earth. And why not? If, as they fully believed, the dog-star Sirius had so much control over an event to them so paramount in importance, what was there to prevent other stars of great magnitude from exercising similar influence in other directions, and upon other matters as nearly related to their welfare, as denizens of the earth? Thus, by combining the visible and known powers around them with the invisible, supposed to exist in the starry world above, they inaugurated a rude system of worship, in order to satisfy the cravings of their nature for something higher and greater than themselves. In the numberless stars and clusters which so thickly studded the realms of the upper world, they concluded must reside the powers of earth and heaven; and to these powers they gave an ideal personality, and called them gods, and worshipped them as such, believing that they had the power to add to, or take from them, some share of their scanty inheritance, as dwellers on the earth. There must however have been an interval of long ages between the first conception of religious feeling in connection with star-worship, and a regular organized system of stellar worship, appropriating domicils for the gods in the mapped-out constellations, and their priests and teachers duly installed and operative as a part, and the most prominent one, too, of the national policy of government. We find that when this organized system was established under the patronage of the rulers, that it was by design, or otherwise, incomplete, and only provisional to something higher and grander to come after. In this their first official act, but seven planets had been named, and the number seen was a mystic number, each planet being the supposed residence of a god. The ancient Greeks, who had doubtless copied from Egyptian customs, held that the god Saturn had his residence in the planet Saturn, which was to them, and their discoveries, located farthest from the Sun, whose year required thirty of ours; and seeing he measured time with so slow a pace, they called him the Father of Time. Connected with the establishment of the religion under the seven planets, and the symbolical and perfect number seven, was a prophecy of a more exalted system of worship, that should usher in that more perfect system of twelve, that has been perpetuated in every religion under heaven down to the present day. The prophecy had reference also to Saturn, who, it was said, devoured all his male children except Jupiter, whom his mother hid until manhood, when he warred upon and dethroned his sire. The interpretation of the prophecy seems to be this: "Saturn was time; Time destroys all his own works, but the Sun, one of the works of Time, under the name of Jupiter, the great god, becomes the permanent object of worship in the place of the planetary system, and Saturn ceases to be king of the gods. Before the system of sun-worship was perfected, although Divine honors were paid to it and the lesser luminaries, yet old Time (for he was old even then) was considered the father of all creation, for all things were begotten by him in the prolific womb of chaos. The god Brahm, of the Hindoos, was time; brahm-a was the first of time, the letter a denoting one or first; in the Hebrew theology a-brahm (a-braham) was the first, or rather, the Father of Time. The parable of Dives and Lazarus represented the old and the new year; as the old year expired it was carried in the bosom of Time, and between time past and present there was an impassable gulf," etc. There was a time anciently, when the whole matter pertaining to religious worship settled down permanently into a regular scientific organization, which contained force and energy sufficient to give to it the element of perpetuity; and in that we have all the shades, creeds, and characteristics of the various systems of religion now on the earth. Bells, balls, steeples, Sunday, holy water, candles, wafers, wine, immersion, sprinkling, prayers, hymns, holy-days, the mystic number seven and the sacred number twelve, cherubs (oxen), seraphs (serpents), the four-faced cherubim of the Jews, the lamb, goats, doves, feasts, fasts, Lord's supper, priests, elders, deacons, rituals and ceremonial of all the religious worship of the world, had their origin in the symbolical forms and stellar worship, which was in its completeness and vigor long prior to the chronological era of the Mosaic account of creation. We are often led into the error of supposing that the ancients knew but little, if anything, of astronomy; but the evidence before us shows us the fallacy of such opinions; for so accurately had they mapped the heavens that modern astronomers have accepted the work as correct, needing no improvements at their hands. Forty-eight constellations or imaginary forms were traced out, by drawing around them the outline of some animal or instrument, by which they have been made known and described in their places and evolutions to all astronomers down to the present day. It is also clearly evident that these ancient astronomers worked out the problem of the starry world upon the basis of a religious idea, fully believing that the Almighty controlling power of the Universe resided in and among these distant moving luminaries, and from their dwelling-place in the heavens could, by prayers and other ceremonies, be propitiated and induced to grant favors to the faithful and devout petitioners.

J. D. PIERSON.

A NEW ANÆSTHETIC.—M. Preterre, a dentist of Paris, states that, after a considerable experience of the protoxide of nitrogen as an anæsthetic, he considered it a most precious agent. In one or two minutes at most, a sufficient sleep is obtained to extract a tooth or to practice an operation of short duration. After awaking, the nausea, the loss of appetite, the helplessness and the fatigue, which ordinarily follow anæsthesia obtained by chloroform or other, never occur.

THE RELIGION OF NATURE.

NUMBER ONE.

"True law is right reason conformable to nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal, whose commands urge us to duty, and whose prohibitions restrain us from evil. Whether it enjoins or forbids, the good respect its injunctions, and the wicked treat them with indifference. This law cannot be contradicted by any other law, and is not liable either to derogation or abrogation. Neither the Senate nor the people can give us any dispensation for not obeying this universal law of justice. It needs no other expositor and interpreter than our own conscience. It is not one thing at Rome, and another at Athens; one thing to-day, and another to-morrow; but in all times and in all nations this universal law must forever reign eternal and imperishable. It is the sovereign master and emperor of all being. God himself is its author, its promulgator and enforcer. And he who does not obey it flies from himself, and does violence to the very nature of man. And by so doing he will endure the severest penalties, even if he avoid the other evils which are usually accounted punishments."

He who is infidel to revealed religion as contained in the Bible, and endeavors by reason to overthrow it, is continually met with the question: "If you destroy our religion, what can you give us in its place?" The mind of the religionist has been so educated into receiving all moral instruction from the priest, the church, and the sacred books, that he cannot perceive that any notion of morality can be obtained from any other source; destroy a belief in future rewards and punishments, and you destroy all his ideas of moral obligation. He owes no allegiance to man; he is devoted entirely to God. If he performs an act of kindness to his fellow-being, it is not because he loves him, but because, thereby, he may ingratiate himself into the favor of his God, escape hell, and win heaven. Hence, to destroy his motives for doing right—dogmatic religion, with its hopes and fears for the future—is to destroy all his moral obligations. Such men feel that they must have a religion to supply motives for being humanitarian; they are dangerous without it. Does it ever occur to the minds of such men to ask the question, why infidels are moral men? What incentive compels men, who are even atheists—men who neither fear hell nor hope for heaven—to take their lives in their hands, ready to sacrifice all that they have and are for a principle? We have seen them patriots, like Paine and Jefferson; philanthropists, like Robert Owen and Frances Wright; and everywhere we find them at their country's call in their country's need. And when he, who believes not in a future existence, sacrifices his life for the good of humanity, or for the sake of a principle, he, as far as motives are concerned, sacrifices his life, indeed. What principle, think ye, prompts him to do all this?

"As master, landlord, husband, father, he does not see the most bitter part in either. But then, he thanks to him for a 'that'; 'Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that; 'It's naething but a milder feature. Of our poor sinners, corrupt nature, 'Nae'll get the best o' moral works, 'Mang black Gentooes and Pagan Turks, 'O hunters wild on Foutaxi, 'Wha never heard of orthodoxy. 'That's the power o' man's friend in need, 'The gentleman in word and deed, 'It's no through terror of damnation; 'It's just a carnal inclination." Burns.

The Spectator of this city, when it was the Christian Spectator, spoke of the noble-minded Shelley, in an article extracted from the New York Watchman, thus:

"We regard his memory with unmitigated disgust and undisguised loathing. He offered the deepest and darkest insults to Christianity; he poured upon it continued and never-failing streams of bitterness and scorn; he trampled with his high malice upon the devout and tender feelings of the Christian heart. His rage and fury toward the God of the Bible seems incredible. Of all opponents to Christianity, he was the most bitter; of all scorners, the most malignant. Gifted with an organization so exquisite, that he might have almost heard the angelic anthems ever floating through the gateways of heaven, and with power to great that he might have breathed forth such songs of praise as the rapt seraph could chant before the throne, he yet stooped to listen to the horrid blasphemies of devils, and trained his powers to utter denunciations that would have startled hell. Milton trod the mountain heights of poetry that his fine spirit might breathe the pure air of heaven. But Shelley trod those lofty heights that he might blaspheme God at the foot of His throne. Others have polluted the Temple, but he lifted the veil, and entered the Holy of Holies, that he might shriek out defiance in the very presence of God."

Now, in such a wretch, could it be expected that there should exist a single good quality; in one to whom they have ascribed a character no way inferior to Milton's Lucifer? And yet with the same breath, they say the following of him:

"We freely concede that toward man, Shelley manifested noble qualities. But for the dark and defiant attitude which he assumed to all that the pious heart venerates and adores, his memory would be cherished even by those insensible to the merits of his poetry. In his relations toward man he was generous, forgiving, kind-hearted, noble in all respects. He hated injustice, sympathized deeply with the wrongs and woes of humanity, and was ready to become a martyr to what he considered the interests of truth and humanity. There was nothing gross or sensual in his nature. He was abstemious in diet and temperate in all his appetites. The memory of all this, together with the sorrows that Shelley bore in estrangement from home and friends, and the consciousness that he was regarded as an alien and an outcast, would tend to excite the deepest pity and sympathy. But when we think of him and his attacks upon our holy religion, our pity is lost in indignation."

This last sentence is the cream of the whole. Had Shelley given way to his appetites and passions; been intolerant and bigoted in the orthodox faith; obeyed the injunction of the "beloved disciple": "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Had he taken the advice of Burns, to

"Learn these mild prayers and half-mild graces, 'Wit well-spread loaves, and lang' yer faces; 'Grant a solemn, lengthened groan, 'And damn a' parties but your own."

The Spectator would have joined Burns in saying to him:

"I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver, 'A steady, sturdy, staunch believer."

Had he known that though he should "speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not" faith in Christian dogmas, he would be "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;" he might have renounced good works, and depended entirely on a superannuated faith. I pity the poor bigots who can so far forget common decency, as well as the tenets of forgiveness they repeat in the Lord's prayer, as to say: "The language of many pious men said aloud: 'It is for God to forgive, but we, His servants, are bound to recollect that this young man offered to Christ and Christianity the deepest insult which ear has heard, or which it has entered into the heart of man to conceive.'" Probably the New York Watchman and the Christian Spectator felt, after comparing themselves with Shelley, like thanking God they were not as other men, even as Shelley, who only knew the Religion of Nature, while they rejoiced in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

J. W. MACKIE.

A LADY was recently sent from Galveston to New York by the Adams Express. She was transferred from one messenger to another like any other "valuable package."

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2:50 3:00 4:00
4:00 4:10 5:15

EXTRA TRIP SATURDAY NIGHT.
Leaving San Antonio at 6:30, Oakland at 6:40, and San Fran-
cisco at 11:30.

A line of Freight Boats for Oakland and San Antonio will
leave Ferry Wharf, near foot of Market street, daily (Sun-
days excepted), as follows:

SAN ANTONIO. OAKLAND. SAN FRANCISCO.
8:00 A. M. 7:00 A. M. 9:30 P. M.
1:00 P. M.

